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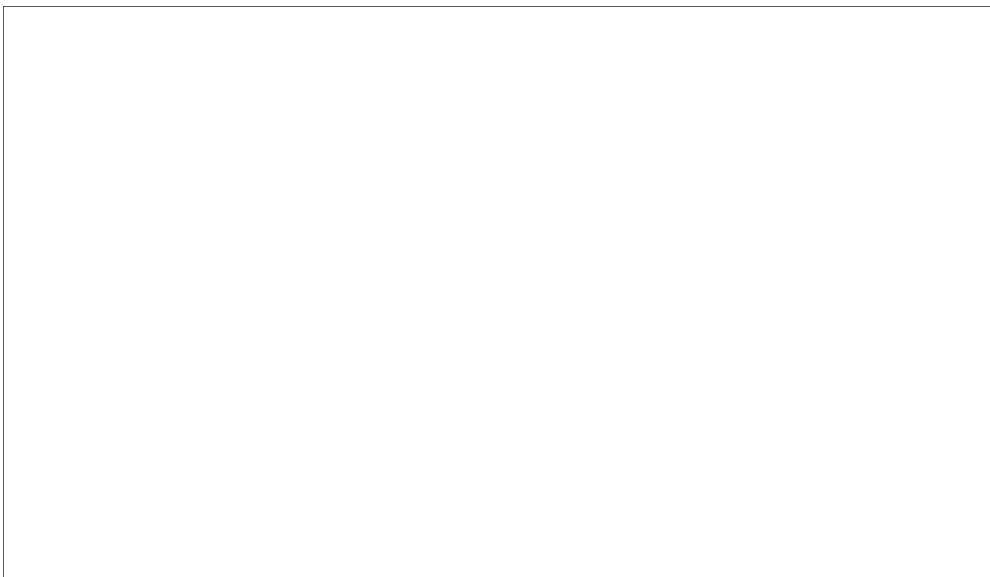
**SECRET**  
SECURITY INFORMATION

1 August 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director for Current Intelligence  
SUBJECT: Director's Query re American Prestige Abroad

1. Pursuant to our telephone conversation late Thursday afternoon, I have instructed the Area Divisions of DD/P to send to you, with a copy to the Assistant Director for National Estimates, all replies received from our Stations in answer to the Director's query regarding the decline of American prestige abroad. As you know, the Director has asked that the Field Stations send their replies to Washington prior to 24 August 1953.

2. Attached for your information is a copy of the message which the Director caused to be dispatched by cable and pouch to the following Stations:



Attachment

25X1

**SECRET**  
SECURITY INFORMATION

Ref: OOI-8849

COPY OF DIRECTOR'S QUERY DISPATCHED TO FIELD STATIONS BY  
CABLE [REDACTED]

1. Reports we have received particularly from returning travellers abroad indicate that in varying degrees the general American position abroad has deteriorated and that there is growing hostility to this country in the free world. We recognize that this varies in different countries and areas of the world and as this is a circular message going to many Stations we cannot in a message of this nature deal with the particular situation in the country where you are stationed and in certain areas this comment may not be applicable. We desire, however, that you should discreetly review the situation in your area of responsibility and send us your views on the following points:

- a) Whether or not American prestige has decreased abroad.
- b) If so, when did decline start?
- c) What were major causes contributing to it and their relative importance?
- d) When did it reach its lowest ebb?
- e) Has it undergone any change in the last six months?
- f) The measures which you feel could be taken both in this country and locally to help meet this situation.

2. We propose to prepare an overall intelligence roundup based on replies to this message. [REDACTED]

3. The fact that this message has been sent you and that you are making such a report should be kept entirely secret except on a strictly need to know basis in your own office [REDACTED]

4. We desire, however, to have your views and do not wish you to pull your punches in informing us of them because only a completely frank presentation can be of real help to us. We need your pouched reply by 24 August. Cable us when dispatched.

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*OCI-8849*

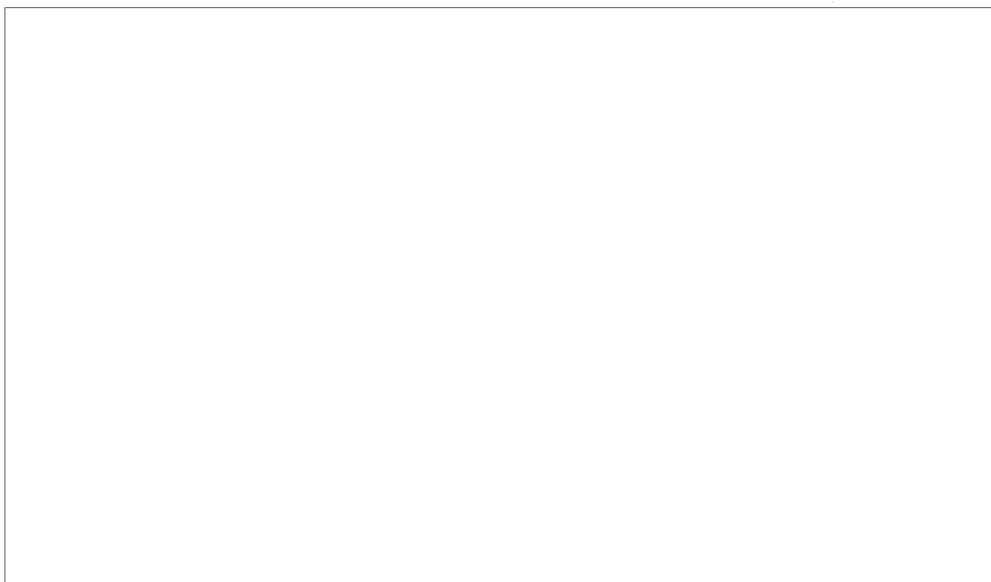
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Security Information

NSC ACTION 867 dated 30 July 1953

REPORTED DECLINE IN U. S. PRESTIGE ABROAD

Directed the Psychological Strategy Board to prepare for Council consideration before mid-September a study of the reported decline in U. S. prestige abroad, with particular reference to the following questions:

- a. When did the decline in prestige commence?
- b. What were major causes which contributed to the decline, and their relative importance?
- c. When did our prestige reach its lowest ebb?
- d. Has our prestige in the world undergone any significant change in the last six months?
- e. What action should the U. S. take to improve the existing situation?

NOTE: The above action subsequently referred to the Psychological Strategy Board for implementation.

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**SECURITY INFORMATION**

**FDD APPRAISAL OF US PRESTIGE IN THE FREE WORLD**

31 August 1953

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The following appraisal of the status of US prestige in the free world is expressed in terms of the opinions of non-Communist newspapers roughly over the past year up to mid-1953.

It should be emphasized that this appraisal is not based on a systematic study of opinions regarding the US, but is rather an impressionistic recording of ideas derived through the regular scanning of the foreign press for other information. As such, this paper is limited generally to broad impressions and is not able as a rule to pin-point high or low points in American prestige.

## I. Western Europe

### A. General

No serious decline or substantial change in American prestige has been noticed. While certain events connected with the US have met with unfavorable reaction, they do not seem to have had a serious effect on views of the US as the main source of strength in the free world or on its position of leadership. The events most consistently noted as having this adverse effect are Senator McCarthy's activities, the Rosenberg case, and the McCarran immigration law. US trade restrictions on imports from Europe and unpleasant incidents involving US soldiers on occupation duty and on leave received varying amounts of unfavorable publicity.

### B. Individual countries

#### 1. Scandinavia (Sweden, Norway, Denmark)

As judged by editorial and other comment in the Scandinavian press, no decline during the past year in American prestige in these countries is discernible.

Editorial comment on the Korean armistice was unanimously favorable, and showed sympathy with American losses, admiration of the American effort during the war and understanding of the American position. American "resolution and daring" in almost singlehandedly resisting aggression in Korea was viewed with gratitude as perhaps having saved the world a third world war.

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In reading the Scandinavian press one gains the impression that, aside from certain aspects of American politics and legislation - "McCarthyism", the McCarran immigration law, certain trade restrictions - which perhaps cause irritation rather than lowered prestige, the US is continuously regarded as the best hope of Western European democracy for maintaining its independence and freedom.

## 2. Benelux countries

The prompt and extensive assistance rendered by American troops during the February floods in the Netherlands has made a deep and favorable impression on the Dutch people.

Both the Dutch and the Belgium press were unanimous in condemning Senator McCarthy's actions, noting that they tended to injure American prestige. President Eisenhower's statement clarifying his stand on the "book burning" issue pacified some of the critics.

Belgian newspapers generally and the Dutch Catholic press in particular deplored the execution of the Rosenbergs, especially when President Eisenhower refused to commute their sentence after Roman Catholic dignitaries had urged such action.

On economic grounds the Dutch press especially deplores the inconsistencies in American policies. It is argued that on the one hand we have urged increased productivity in all sectors of the economy, while on the other hand our continued high protective tariff prevents foreign entry into the American market. On several occasions substantial sums of money had been spent in promotion only to have US competitors invoke the escape clause once a market had been developed. The most notable example of this was the cheese and dried milk affair.

These specific criticisms and resentments do not seem, however, to have significantly changed the standing of the United States in the eyes of the Benelux people.

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### 3. West Germany

Considerable adverse publicity has been occasioned by the visit of Messrs. Cohn and Shine of Senator McCarthy's investigating committee, by US immigration policy, and by trade restrictions, but those factors seem not to have affected opinions or basic policies of the US, which are generally favorably regarded. The press of the Social Democratic Party continues to criticize the US indirectly through attacks on Adenauer's support of EDC, and feels that the US is not sufficiently flexible or conciliatory in its foreign policy. Expression of outright anti-American sentiment in the German press is rare.

### 4. Austria

Austrian views of the US are conditioned by the prospects for a peace treaty, which would remove all foreign occupation troops. Austrians resent American rigidity on certain treaty principles, which they consider make agreements with the USSR seem remote or impossible.

However, press sentiments on American policies as a whole have remained generally favorable since the war. Austrian proximity to the Iron Curtain has given its citizens a highly realistic view of Soviet tyranny as has also Soviet control of Austrian enterprises and the ensuing economic difficulties of the country. The Austrians have been willing to follow American leadership in restricting East-West trade even though traditionally a large part of their trade has been with the present-day Satellites. They have also been highly appreciative of Marshall Plan Aid in post-war reconstruction and industrial expansion.

### 5. France

No overall trend, either declining or strengthening, regarding US prestige in France has been discernible from the scanning of the Paris economic and political press. Undoubtedly events and conditions

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during the first six months of 1953 have served to reinforce or weaken already existing feelings, but the Paris press has appeared relatively stable in its expression of pro- and anti-American opinion.

#### 6. Italy

A perusal of the non-Communist press in Italy shows that while the overall picture regarding American prestige in that country has not undergone radical changes, a few incidents have tended to lower it, at least temporarily.

Specifically, the matter of "McCarthyism" keeps cropping up quite frequently and the methods used by the Senator are openly criticized. The denomination of "the American inquisitor" appears quite frequently in the headlines.

The second incident affecting us adversely was the Rosenberg case, and for two reasons:

a. The non-Communist press felt that, by denying clemency, we were simply providing grist for the Communist propaganda mill; no question was raised as to their guilt or to their being denied the protection of the law.

b. Capital punishment does not exist in Italy and the continued discussion of their case tended to acquaint all Italians with the fact that capital punishment does exist in the US, thus placing us in an unfavorable position.

#### 7. Spain

For Spain, US prestige seems to be measured almost exclusively in terms of uncompromising hostility and aggressiveness toward Communism at home and abroad. Thus, while the increasing recognition of Spain as a factor in combating Communism has raised the stock of the US in Spain, the Spanish press could not understand the US's coming to terms in Korea. Failure to win a clear-cut, complete victory in Korea has thus resulted in some loss of prestige.

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## 8. Portugal

The Portuguese press maintains a consistently favorable attitude toward the US. Accordingly, US prestige in Portugal must be considered quite high.

## II. Near and Middle East and Africa

### A. General

In the Arab states, Iran, and in African territories under the control of Western European countries, the issue of nationalism seems to override every other consideration and is the constant against which the measure of US prestige rises and falls. For the Arab states (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Jordan, Yemen, Libya, and the Sudan), any move, past or present, actually and apparently favoring Israel lowers American prestige. An analogous situation holds somewhat for Israel. To the degree that the US does not support Iranian claims in the oil dispute, American prestige falls. In colonial Africa, particularly Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, lack of US support of national independence movements against France seems to have had a serious effect on the prestige of the US, which has been viewed as the source of hope for independence. Any move for independence in which a Moslem group is involved evokes a sympathetic response throughout the Moslem world from Morocco to Pakistan.

Inasmuch as the US has not clearly identified itself with the interests of Arab states against Israel, with Iranian interests against Great Britain, or with the interests of foreign dominated areas in Africa against the controlling European country, US prestige has just as clearly declined.

### B. Individual countries

#### 1. Israel

Aside from issues connected with Israel's disagreements with Arab states, three factors have been noted which contribute to the perceptible decline in US prestige:

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- a. American foreign policy is described as being confused. The confusion is attributed to the change in administration.
- b. Taking the revolts in East Germany as a case in point, an independent newspaper points out the impossibility of the Eisenhower policy of forcible intervention in Eastern Europe. It concludes that the US government is in the curious position of not being able to do anything for Eastern Europe by force and yet being too proud to attempt to do something by diplomacy.
- c. The execution of the Rosenbergs.

## 2. Iran

The first sign of the decline of US prestige in Iran was noted after our lack of support of the Iranian government's claims against the AIOC in the International Court of Justice at the Hague. Any further US attempts to arbitrate between Iran and Britain in the oil issue brought a further decline in US prestige.

More recently, Iranian public opinion toward the US declined further, in part because of the following factors:

- a. The official US attitude against the participation of US private enterprise in oil dealings with the new Iranian National Oil Company.
- b. The continued refusal by the US to grant loans to Iran.
- c. The US expression of concern about the increased Tudeh Party influence in Iran; it is considered a kind of intervention in matters of purely domestic concern.

## 3. Pakistan

US prestige has risen and seems quite high at present. Pakistan is generally pro-US and outspokenly anti-USSR. Thus, the possibility of a MEDO seems generally popular. The recent grant of wheat, the previous year's wheat loan, and the TCA mission have added to US prestige. The failure of the UN mission to mediate the Kashmir dispute in October 1952 resulted in some unpopularity for the US, presumably because the mission was headed by an American.

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### III. Far East

#### A. Individual countries

##### 1. Japan

The impression is that US prestige has been gradually rising over past years since the war and is now at a comfortably high point. Leftist and Communist publicity on minor incidents such as the Uchinada incident involving local resistance to the use of a firing range by US forces, and the issue of criminal jurisdiction over US armed forces personnel results in irritations which do not seem to have a permanent or deep effect.

##### 2. Korea

After the high point in US prestige attained by UN intervention against the North Korean aggression, prestige has declined since the beginning of truce negotiations and reached a low point at the signing of the truce.

##### 3. Philippines

The US seems universally popular in the Philippines. No adverse criticism has been noted. (based on newspapers for June, July, and August, 1953)

##### 4. Thailand

The non-Leftist, pro-government press has maintained a generally pro-US attitude.

##### 5. Burma

US prestige suffered severely between February and April of this year when the issue of Chinese Nationalist troops in Burma was to be brought before the UN by Burma. The US was viewed as responsible for or at least implicated in their presence in Burma. The UN working agreement and the conciliatory attitude of the US at the subsequent Bangkok conference seems to have improved Burmese feeling toward the US somewhat.

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## ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Officer designations should be used in the "TO" column. Under each comment a line should be drawn across sheet and each comment numbered to correspond with the number in the "TO" column. Each officer should initial (check mark insufficient) before further routing. This Routing and Record Sheet should be returned to Registry.

FROM:

0/20011

NO.

22/P 4911

DATE

TO	ROOM NO.	DATE		OFFICER'S INITIALS	COMMENTS
		REC'D	FWD'D		
1. AD/CI	20289	4 Aug	4 Aug	KAPM.	
2. CS/INT		6 Aug	6 Aug	JRM	
3. AD/CI	File	24 Aug	24 Aug	P.E. Jr.	
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